(b) The fire broke out on 26th May, 2001 at 1430 hours onboard INS Amba, submarine depot ship, undergoing refit at Cochin Shipyard Ltd. Two non-defence civilians were killed. Prima facie it is believed that the dhobi onboard ship, directly requested one of the welders from the shipyard to undertake some welding jobs for fixing a bracket in his compartment. This was done ignoring the safety norms for welding activities on ship. The stationery stores in the adjoining cabin probably caught fire through conduction of heat due to high temperature. The dhobi is believed to have been suffocated and died, on the spot whereas his assistant standing near him succumbed reaching the hospital.

(c) and (d) Inquiry in this matter has since been ordered and it is in progress. The existing rules provide for prevention of such eventualities and the enforcements of these rules has been emphasized. Preventive measures are reviewed from time to time for strict enforcement to avoid such happenings.

Expenditure on Arms, Equipments and Weapons

505. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government would spend a staggering US$ 95 billion on arms, equipments and weapons during the next 15 years;

(b) whether out of this, US$ 20 billion would be on the development of its nuclear weapons, command and control structure; and

(c) if so, whether Government have assessed the impact of this on our plans to alleviate poverty from the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) Government has not made any long-term planning of spending a staggering US$ 95 billion on arms, equipments and weapons during the next 15 years.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No occasion has arisen to make such an assessment.

Purchase of AJT Hawk Aircraft

506. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to abandon its plan to purchase AJT Hawk Aircraft after over ten years of negotiation and go for the Russian MIG-AT;

(b) whether it is reported that the MIG-AT is still under development and yet to be certified; and

(c) if so, what are Government's views in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) Various options for the acquisition of an AJT are under examination by the Government.

Purchase of Books

†507. SHRI DEVI PRASAD SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the procedure followed in his Ministry for purchase of books;

(b) the criterion for the selection of the books;

(c) the proportion of the different subjects to which these books are related;

(d) the ratio of Hindi and English books;

(e) the estimated cost likely to be incurred on purchase of books during financial year; and

(f) whether any incentive programmes or cultural functions are organised to create interest in reading of books among the employees of ministry and defence personnel?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Based on the recommendations of officers, both civilian and Service, as also reviews available, the Book Selection Committee of the Ministry of Defence purchases the books.

(c) Subjects covering security, strategic planning, military affairs, warfare, arms, etc. constitute the main bulk of these purchases. No ratio for purchase of books on a particular subject, has been fixed.

(d) The ratio of Hindi and English books is roughly 2:3.

(e) Appropriately about two-third of the annual budget grant for the Ministry of Defence Library is spent on books every year. Rs. 6,43,774/were spent on books last year.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.